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290557Z Aug 05

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 001247

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/ARPI, NEA/PI, E, EB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/28/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [KMPI](#) [BA](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER ON G8-BMENA ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER

REF: MANAMA 1185

Classified by Ambassador William T. Monroe for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) In an August 27 meeting covering several subjects, Foreign Minister Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa told the Ambassador that Bahrain supports the Bahrain Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence (BCEE) and wants to see it up and running soon. In response to the Ambassador's question, Shaikh Mohammed said that Beyster Institute expert David Mosby is welcome to come to Bahrain to start his work as soon as he is able, "even tomorrow."

2. (SBU) Shaikh Mohammed said that the GOB was seeking funding for a facility for the BCEE. The BCEE would be "an unwelcome guest" at the Bahrain Institute for Banking and Finance (BIBF), a finance industry, not government, supported institution. The BIBF had agreed to house the BCEE temporarily, perhaps two to three years, but Shaikh Mohammed said he would prefer not to have to use it at all. In response to the Minister's question, the Ambassador said that funding a building, or even a feasibility study for a building, was outside MEPI's scope. Shaikh Mohammed said that the BCEE will be a G8-BMENA establishment and, as such, the G8 should fund development of an independent Center. The Ambassador noted that Mosby, among his other duties, could assist the GOB in identifying longer-term facilities options for the BCEE, and in attracting funding.

3. (C) Shaikh Mohammed said that Bahrain would host a meeting of the Forum for the Future (FfF) steering committee at its Embassy in London on Friday, September 9. He asked whether NEA PDAS Cheney plans to attend. He noted that Crown Prince Salman will be in London at that time and intends to host a lunch in honor of steering committee participants. Shaikh Mohammed stated that the November 11-12 FfF conference in Manama should highlight for the people of the BMENA region progress made on the many initiatives discussed at Sea Island and Rabat. The September 9 meeting is a good opportunity to get updates and make decisions about which initiatives to focus on.

MONROE